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The Origins and Development of the Agricultural Association System in Modern Japan

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The agricultural associations were among the most important institutions in the rural communities of pre-war Japan. They began to make their appearance shortly after the Meiji Restoration (1868), the starting point of modern Japan. In the latter half of the 1890's they made a remarkable growth until at last they developed into a nation-wide network of organizations. The agricultural associations played in those days various economic and political rôles in the interests of agricultural communities, particularly of the landed class there. It would be impossible, however, to give a detailed account of all those rôles within this limited space, so that the purpose of the present article is simply to describe against a political background the whole process of their birth, expansion and growth into a national organization in the form of a "hierarchy of agricultural associations" during the period from about 1878 to 1910 and thereby to illuminate the characteristic features of this institution in historical perspective.

I The Beginnings of the Agricultural Associations

The appearance of the agricultural associations dates from 1878 or thereabouts.[1] They arose in some rural communities under various appellations, such as agricultural associations, agricultural conferences, agricultural councils. It was basically a response on the part of agricultural communities to a new

1) The beginning of the co-operative association system in Japan dates from about the same time.

situation brought about by the infiltration of merchandise economy into these communities and an enlarged market for agricultural products as merchandise. This tendency received a direct and powerful impetus from the inflation boom and appreciation of agricultural products caused by the South-Western Rebellion (the Rebellion of the Satsuma Clan in 1877). It awoke agricultural leaders to the necessity of encouraging agricultural improvement and creating an organization with that end in view.

Under the then prevailing political situation, the newly organized agricultural associations were destined to perform much more than a mere economic function. An inquiry into those people responsible for the creation of agricultural associations of the day discloses that the majority of them belonged to the class of "gono" or country gentlemen (big landlords and farmers) who had something to do with local administration at the lowest level, though it must be admitted that a unified system of local government of a modern State remained yet to be established. To cite an instance, Genrokuro Furuhashi, the organizer of the "Agricultural Conference" in Kita-shidara-gun, Aichi-ken, came from an old family of big landlords famed for saké-brewing for generations. He himself successively held the posts of village headman ("nanushi", "kocho") and county headman ("guncho"). What generally characterized the leaders of early agricultural associations who occupied such social positions was their caution or hatred against the "democratic movement" ("jiyu minken undo", lit. liberty and popular rights movement) which was an effort to establish a kind of bourgeois democracy in Japan. In the eyes of these moderate rural leaders and guardians of the conventional order, the rising tide of "political fervor" appeared to be a very radical and undesirable proposition. Furuhashi was no exception to the rule. He expected, as his biographer writes of him, that he would be able to channel farmers' minds into "steady business" by pushing forward agricultural improvement by means of his agricultural conference and in this way to repress their "sumptuous" leanings towards indulgence in political talks and neglect of their plough. In those days it sometimes happened that a county office clerk was sent to supervise the proceedings of an agricultural association so that those present should not deviate into non-agricultural, especially political, discussions.[2]

Such being the origins and character of the agricultural associations, it

2) Hakuju Kurihara, A Biographical History of Agricultural Organizations (Jimbutsu Nogyo Dantai-shi) (1956), p. 14.

was but natural that the Government should entertain a favorable opinion of them. In May 1880 the Government instructed the several prefectural authorities to encourage agricultural conferences. This Governmental action was meant to meet two needs. One was a necessity from agricultural policy. The Government's agricultural policy was shifting from emphasis on the introduction of Western agricultural methods to emphasis on improving on the conventional farming methods, with the result that it was deemed necessary to bring into this line of policy the class of big landlords and farmers, that is, the leaders in the traditional agricultural methods. The other was the necessity — more political in character — of stemming the aforesaid democratic movement. During the years 1880–81 this movement swept the whole land penetrating into agricultural communities. The Government had to meet the urgent need of fighting and disorganizing the movement by winning to its side and organizing the rural leaders.[3] This circumstance explains the founding of a national organization, "Japan Agricultural Association" ("Dai Nippon Nokai", lit. Agricultural Association of Great Japan) under the sponsorship of the Government in 1881. Under the presidency of an Imperial prince, the Association had for its honorary members some members of the Imperial family and of the upper layers of officialdom, for its special members executive officials and technical experts responsible for agricultural administration at the central and local levels, and for its ordinary members about 600 leaders in agricultural communities, who, however, were not allowed to participate in the proceedings of the Association. Thus the organization was, so to speak, an exact miniature of the Imperial Regime. It was an organization entirely subordinate to the Government which was supposed to act simply as an auxiliary organ to help the infiltration of the Government's policies and, as above stated, to bring over to its camp influencial leaders in agricultural communities.[4]

In 1883 the Government introduced an "Industrial Advisory Committee" system. The members were to be appointed by a prefectural governor from among men of influence within his jurisdiction, and the committee was charged

3) This was one of the Government's fundamental measures against the democratic movement. We may also understand in the same light the promulgation of an Imperial Edict announcing the inauguration of the Diet (1881).

4) A History of Agricultural Development in Japan (Nippon Nogyo Hattatsu-shi), ed. by the 'History of Agricultural Development in Japan' Research Society, Vol. III (1954), pp. 279ff.; Matsuji Okutani, A History of Agricultural Administration in Modern Japan (Kindai Nippon Nosei-shiron) (1938), pp. 129ff.

with the mission of providing advice and suggestions as requested by the governor in regard to industrial affairs. Tomomi Iwakura, one of the leading members of the Government in suggesting the introduction of the system stated that in view of the unstable internal situation and the constant friction between Government and people it was necessary to bring about a reconciliation between the two by winning over local men of influence through honors couferred in the name of the State (the honorable title of membership in the Industrial Advisory Committee).[5] There is no denying that the establishment of the system by enlisting the services of its members made a certain contribution to the growth of agricultural associations in some districts.

Generally speaking, however, until about 1887 the expansion of agricultural associations fell short of expectations and their activities were far from active. This may be accounted for firstly by the fact that not a few landlords and farmers, who were supposed to form the central force in the agricultural association movement, suffered fatally from farm depression consequent on a marked change in the financial policy after 1881 or the adoption of a deflation policy. A second explanation is that with the increasing intensity of the democratic movement the Government was too busily occupied in suppressing a series of disturbances to develop a positive agricultural policy. Thirdly, the Western agricultural methods encouraged by the Government had proved to be a failure in many instances, which fact, coupled with the spread of the democratic movement, resulted in a general demand for non-interference in private business. Last but no least, the local government system was not yet so well established as to serve the purpose of infiltrating the Government's policies.

II A New Stage — From 1887 Onwards

With recovery from the economic depression after 1887, there was an active revival of the movement towards the formation of agricultural associations. Taking advantage of this tendency, Kaoru Inoue, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce in the Kuroda Cabinet, attempted to further the policy of positively fostering agricultural associations. By his order, Masana Maeda, Director of the Agricultural Bureau, later Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Commerce,

5) A Documentary Biography of Prince Tomomi Iwakura (Iwakura-ko Jikki), Vol. II (1906), pp. 1982–83.

and Tokiyoshi Yokoi did research and drafting work as to the organization of agricultural associations. The Agricultural Science Society (Nogaku-kai), an organization of young agricultural scholars who were graduates of Tokyo Agricultural and Forestry College, became increasingly interested in agricultural associations with a view to improving on agricultural techniques. The Society, in response to Inoue's inquiry, urged the establishment of agricultural associations as a means of encouraging agriculture, and proceeded to publish the "Promotion of Agricultural Development" in 1891, in which the idea of a hierarchy of agricultural associations first appeared, with the Central Agricultural Association at the top, Prefectural and County Agricultural Associations in the middle and Branches of County Agricultural Associations (Town and Village Agricultural Associations) at the bottom.

What was noteworthy in Inoue's agricultural policy, especially in his policy towards the agricultural associations was that it had a close connection with his idea of local government. Through the great efforts of Aritomo Yamagata, Minister of Home Affairs, the City Organization Law and the Town and Village Organization Law were promulgated in April 1888, which were the fundamental law of pseudo-local-self-government of the Japanese type. This system of local government was in essence a combination of centralized bureaucracy and the dominance of the local propertied classes among which the controlling factor was country gentlemen (big landlords and farmers). It was meant to be a shock-absorbing device to mitigate the explosive energies of local political campaigns. In this sense it was the mainstay of the absolutist regime. Inoue and Yamagata were in complete agreement with each other in regard to this basic idea of local "autonomy". When called upon to join the Kuroda Cabinet, Inoue wrote a letter to Kuroda for his approval, which in part read: "Unless we regiment the middle and upper propertied classes into a strong organization, we may finally be left to the tender mercy of the radicals. It is, therefore, necessary to band those propertied classes together and, at the local level, to place them at the helm of local administration and, at the central level, to organize them into one conservative party, so that they may become a bulwark against possible political disturbances.[6] What Inoue called the radicals were the "Minto" (lit. popular parties — the "Jiyuto" [lit. Liberals], the "Kaishinto" [lit. Reformists] and their affiliates), especially the Left wing, that

6) The Life of Prince Inoue (Scigai Inoue-ko-den), Vol. IV, p. 11.

derived their origin from the democratic movement. They were not so radical as they used to, but they were none the less formidable to the Government. It was Inoue's basic plan to enforce two measures in parallel with each other: regimentation of the local propertied classes into the Government-sponsored scheme of local "autonomy" as a countervailing power against the "radicals" and fostering of the agricultural associations which had the same social classes as leaders as local "self-government".

In November 1891 an Agricultural Association Bill was presented to the second session of the Imperial Diet by the succeeding Cabinet under the premiership of Matsukata, with Munemitsu Mutsu as Minister of Agriculture and Commerce. Although this bill, together with the Credit Association Bill, was shelved and did not survive a dissolution of the Diet, yet it is worthy of note as the first Agricultural Association Bill ever introduced into the Diet. The bill was in substance as follows: (1) Agricultural associations shall be organized in terms of counties. (2) An owner of farm land worth more than 400 yen in a county was eligible for membership. (This was synonymous with a person who pays a land tax of more than 10 yen, or a person qualified to run for a prefectural assembly). (3) Membership was compulsory upon all eligible persons, and membership dues were compulsorily collectible in the same manner as national taxes. (4) Each agricultural association was to be granted a subsidy of not more than 300 yen a year. (5) An agricultural association was to be placed under the supervision of the competent Minister or prefectural governor with regard to its establishment, dissolution, budgets, final accounts, disbursements from subsidies, etc.

According to an explanatory statement, the bill purported to foster the agricultural association system as a means of improving agricultural techniques and as an advisory organ with regard to agricultural policy, but, on the other hand, it had a political design behind it as above stated, which characterized the Government's policies towards agricultural associations from 1880 downward. It was the deliberate intent of the Government to organize the leading landed classes (and compulsorily, too), to subsidize the activities of agricultural associations (which measure was in a way a means of appeasing the landlords' demand for land tax reduction), and to exercise strict supervision over such associations so that the landlord classes might be isolated from the influence of the anti-Government "Minto". It was those politically colorless and moderate landlord classes that the Government expected would become the sup-

port and driving force of the newly introduced local "self-government" system and be the social foundations on which the apparently constitutional government (in fact a semi-absolutist State) should rest. Especially the Agricultural Association Bill which laid emphasis on county agricultural associations is worthy of note in connection with the administrative organization of counties as part of local "self-government". The founders of the local government system, particularly Yamagata who was the leading spirit, insistently stuck to the county system in the face of fairly strong opposition within the Government. Each county was to have a county office as a terminal organ of the bureaucratic machinery of a centralized State, and its head was appointed from among the increasing government officials. Two-thirds of the members of the county assembly were indirectly elected members chosen by the members of the town and village assemblies within the county, while the rest were chosen by mutual election from among the landlords owning land worth not less than ten thousand yen as a matter of privilege. It was upon these leading landlord classes that the Government relied as the key to the control of agricultural communities. F. Gneist, advisor to the Cabinet, spoke of this privilege of greater landlords with approval: "In view of the large number of owners of small houses and of small acres, a county assembly in Japan will inevitably become an assembly representing the interests of petty farmers whose one-sided assertion will have an evil effect upon the execution of administrative affairs. This abuse must be remedied by conferring the privilege upon larger landlords with the minimum land value of not less than ten thousand yen and making them more interested in self-government so that they may use their wisdom and reputation to the cause of enhancing the independence of self-government." Thus the county system was to be the most important point where bureaucratic administration "from above" and traditional rule by local worthies met. The emphasis the Agricultural Association Bill laid on county units as the core of the hierarchy of agricultural associations may be explained by the fact that the Government attempted to sponsor the founding of an organization of local men of influence under the leadership of the upper landed classes reinforced by the middle classes of landowners and farmers.

The Credit Association Bill brought before the Diet by the Government was also calculated ultimately to preserve and strengthen the social foundations of local "self-government", though not in the same manner as the other bill. For it purported to provide means of financing petty producers on the

verge of ruin.[7] But neither of the bills became law, because a violent clash between the Government and the "Minto" over the budget bill led to a dissolution of the Diet before their passage.

For a while after the abortion of the Agricultural Asscoiation Bill in 1891 the Government could not seize an opportunity to develop a positive agricultural policy. It was partly due to the persistent antagonism between the Government and the Minto. As stated in a preceding paragraph, the Government fostered the agricultural association system for the double purpose of improving agricultural techniques and of isolating the landed classes from the influence of the Minto. At this stage an expansion of the agricultural association system would afford the Minto an opportunity to avail itself of the system to strengthen its own organization. The Government must have felt the need of guarding against this possibility through its experience in violent clashes with the Minto for several sessions of the Diet. The Government had to be cautious particularly of creating agricultural associations with compulsory membership and compulsorily collected dues as the said bill provided for.

Apart from the question of enacting an Agricultural Association Act, agricultural associations had meanwhile made a steady increase on the initiative of the people from about 1887. It was remarkable that they were coming into hierarchal shape at the prefectural, the county, and the town and village levels. The agricultural communities of those days were exposed to violent changes peculiar to capitalism in the formative stage. The infiltration of merchandise economy into agricultural communities, coupled with a heavy load of taxation, brought about a class differentiation of the farming population, the fall of petty farmers, and ultimately the shaking of the traditional community order. To cope with this situation, agricultural leaders had to endeavor to encourage agriculture and improve agricultural techniques. For this purpose, however,

7) Home Minister Shinagawa explained the reason for introducing the Credit Association Bill in these words: "The newly instituted system of local self-government has for its objectives the elimination of the evils of centralized administrative power, the establishment of local independence and the promotion of the local welfare. Unless a proper measure is not now taken to keep the middle and lower classes from losing means of living who are the mainstay of local communities, the spirit of the self-government system will be defeated and national prestige will not be enhanced, nor will national power be developed. The Credit Association Bill the Government is now introducing has the double purpose of financing the middle and lower classes of people by placing low-interest funds at their disposal and of cultivating the spirit of thrift and self-help, thereby building up the strength of local communities." (Proceedings of the House of Peers at the 2nd session of the Imperial Diet)

mere traditional leadership in the capacity of country gentlemen was inadequate. Under the changing new situation, a new organization never known before was needed. It was desirable that this organization should not replace the old leadership of country gentlemen but rather preserve and reinforce it. As for the prefectural and county authorities it was most necessary to follow the Government's fundamental policy of promoting the agricultural industry and at the same time to hold command over agricultural leaders, thereby solidifying the foundations of the local government system. The parallel between the hierarchal form of the agricultural associations and the pyramidal form of the local government system in terms of prefectures, counties, and towns and villages is due partly to the leadership "from above" on the part of the prefectural and county authorities and partly to the positive attitude of the agricultural leaders to adapt themselves to the new local government system. This latter was made possible by an expanded horizontal solidarity of the landed classes through the medium of the expansion of land-ownership beyond the rather narrow bounds of their communities before the introduction of the new local government system.[8]

Through the sponsorship of the prefectural authorities the Kyoto prefecture had the first hierarchal system of agricultural associations in Japan established in 1892. Governor Kunimichi Kitagaki addressed the Kii County Agricultural Association on the occasion of its founding as follows: "It is a matter for congratulation that through your untiring efforts each town and village in this county has been able to have an agricultural association and finally this county has got a county agricultural association. I hope that this newly organized agricultural association will contribute to the improvement and promotion of agriculture in the respective towns and villages and help them make a sound development and live up to the principles of self-government."[9]

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8) The Town and Village Organization Law, though founded on the traditional village order, inevitably involved town and village amalgamation from the necessity of creating towns and villages fit to meet the imperative requirements of a unified State. In 1888, the year when the Law was promulgated, 71,314 cities, towns and villages were reduced to 15,820 by amalgamation. Against this too rash amalgamation policy, agitations were started in different places from April to about November the following year, but such campaigns were already on the ebb in 1890. The local propertied classes began to adapt themselves to the new local government system instead of going the length of opposing the amalgamation at the expense of the local government system itself.

9) Reports of the Kyoto Prefectural Agricultural Association, No. 2, quoted in "A History of Agricultural Development in Japan", Vol. III, p. 411.

The agricultural associations in the whole country numbered 475 in 1890, increased to more than 550 the following year and totaled 2,062 in 1893 (26 prefectural, 212 county, 1,824 town and village agricultural associations).

III The Activities of the All-Japan Agricultural Conference

As seen in the foregoing section, there were an increasing number of hierarchal agricultural associations in many prefectures, including, for instance, the Kyoto Prefectural Agricultural Association which did not confine its activities to mere improvement of agricultural techniques, but went the length of attempting to influence the Government's agricultural policy by taking the lead in petitioning for the enactment of an Agricultural Association Law and the establishment of agricultural laboratories subsidized by the National Treasury. Under these circumstances an opinion was advanced by some members of the Japan Agricultural Association for organizing local agricultural associations on a national scale. This Association, which had been inactive since its establishment in 1881, had merely been publishing a monthly journal and holding a semi-annual exhibition in spring and autumn, thereby facilitating an exchange of knowledge of agricultural techniques. The first step to activate this half dormant organization was the appointment of Masana Maeda, ex-Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Commerce as chief secretary. Maeda had been a keen advocate of organizing agricultural communities by means of agricultural associations and adopting a policy for the encouragement of agriculture; he participated in the drafting of the Agricultural Association Bill (1891). After leaving his office due to a disagreement in opinion with the then Agriculture and Commerce Minister Mutsu in December 1890, he had been devoted to a campaign for the organization of local agriculture, commerce and industry (For the characteristics of his ideas, see the next section). Through his earnest efforts the first All-Japan Agricultural Conference was held in December 1894 under the auspices of the Japan Agricultural Association, attended by more than 600 influencial landlords and farmers. The Conference took up 16 problems pointed out in Maeda's circular "Great Issues in Agriculture" published in June 1894 by the decision of the governing body of the Japan Agricultural Association. The Conference adopted resolutions for the establishment of hierarchal agricultural associations, the determination of fundamental prefectural policy towards industries, the establishment of agricultural banks and agricultural

insurance companies, the encouragement of agricultural education, and others. These resolutions went beyond mere improvement of agricultural techniques and included criticisms and demands as to the Government's agricultural policy. This positive attitude of the Conference attracted general attention as a thing rather extraordinary among business organizations (including chambers of commerce).

At the stage, however, of translating those resolutions into action, opinion was sharply divided among the members of the Japan Agricultural Association. Since, as above stated, the resolutions included criticisms and demands as to governmental policy, a group of members representing the Department of Agriculture and Commerce were opposed to conducting such political campaigns as presenting proposals and petitions to the Cabinet and the Diet in the name of the Japan Agricultural Association (whose president was an Imperial prince!). Against this Maeda and his group were vehemently antagonistic. Between the two there was a substantial difference of opinion as to the character of hierarchal agricultural associations. It was the position of the bureaucrats that an agricultural association was an agricultural technique improvement device pure and simple and that agricultural policy is a matter for a distinct advisory organ, which should merely respond to inquiries of the Government without the freedom to positively initiate campaigns like presenting proposals and petitions. Maeda and his group were of the opinion that these two are functions to be positively performed by agricultural associations. Finally Maeda and his group withdrew from the Japan Agricultural Association in January 1895 to independently carry on an active agricultural campaign, with the result that the effete Japan Agricultural Association turned into a pure organization for research in agricultural techniques and was devoted to the management of an institution of agricultural education (which later became the Tokyo Agricultural College). Of course, Maeda and his group were not diametrically opposed to the Government's agricultural policy. As spokesmen of local agricultural leaders not wholly subordinated to the Government, they were urging the Government's adopting a positive policy for the encouragement of agriculture. Thus they were trying to maintain independence from the Government to that extent.

Thanks to Maeda and his group the All-Japan Agricultural Conference became an annual event after 1895. It was active in discussing and studying agricultural problems and in making proposals to the Government. In the

meantime, there was a considerable progress in the organization of agricultural associations in local communities. In 1898 there were 42 prefectural agricultural associations, more than 500 county agricultural associations and over 8,000 town and village agricultural associations. At the first Conference (1894) many of the local participants were present in their personal private capacity, while at the third Conference 1896 the local participants were, for the most part, representatives of local agricultural associations. Such was the advance in the organization of agricultural associations. These associations in a sense afforded agricultural leaders a platform for making political utterances, whose contents, however, were somewhat different from those of the "Minto" organizations. The latter were demanding land tax reduction and laissez-faire, while the former, on the contrary, were demanding a positive State encouragement of agriculture and were giving decreasing importance to the question of land tax reduction. It had been indeed a slogan of the Minto for the last twenty years, but it gradually lost weight as such, because the rise of rice prices tended to elevate the status of landlords as recipients of rent in kind (rice) and to substantially reduce the land tax burden. As early as the end of the 18th century a tendency started to transform "gono" in terms of Japanese history (landlords who were themselves farmers on a pretty extensive scale) into pure recipients of rent who did no farming but leased all or almost all their land to tenants for rent in kind (rice). This tendency became more pronounced after the Meiji Restoration (1868), especially after the 1890's. These "parasitic" landlords as Japanese historicans term them are to be clearly distinguished from landowners in modern West-European society in that the latter usually lease their land to farming entrepreneurs employing wage laborers, while the former leased their land to petty farmers relying mainly upon the labor of their own family members, and also in that, in the case of the former, the tenants were not simply lease-holders in economic terms, but were also socially more or less subordinated to landlords as traditional leaders and authorities in agricultural communities. An inquiry into the causes of the rampancy of parasitic landowners in Japanese society is outside the scope of the present article, though it is indeed a very important problem in the history of modern Japan. Here we must take note of the following facts. Firstly, there was an increasingly marked tendency for the Government to protect the powerful landed classes as land tax payers and as traditional defenders of order in agricultural communities — or as those constituting the economic and social foundations of State power, and for the landed classes to

seek the Government's protection and to offer co-operation to the Government in order to preserve their social status. This attitude of the landlord classes was perhaps reflected, for instance, in the fact that at the 5th Conference (January 1897) they avoided to take up the problems of opposition to an increase in land tax and of enacting a Tenancy Act on the pretext of "leaving the questions open and reserve them for future discussion". Secondly, this change of attitude on the part of the landlord classes necessarily influenced members of the Diet representing agricultural communities. Diet members of the Minto faction began to assume a compromising attitude to the Government by gradually receding from their old slogans of land tax reduction and laissez-faire in favor of a policy for State encouragement of agriculture. Against this background we must understand the fact that the antagonism that had been pretty bitter at the initial stage just after the inauguration of the Diet tended to abate towards 1894–96 to be gradually replaced by compromise and co-operation between the two. Thus was achieved the compromise between the bureaucratic Government and the agricultural leader classes (chiefly the landlord classes) — essentially the subjugation of the latter to the leadership of the former. Under these circumstances, the Government's policy for the encouragement of agriculture came into more or less systematic shape. Thus the policy found concrete expression in the Vermin Extermination and Prevention Law and the River Law (1896), the Arable Land Readjustment Law, Fertilizer Control Law and the State Aid for Prefectural Agricultural Laboratories Law (1899) and the establishment of the National Agricultural Laboratory which was of a little earlier date (1893). The year 1896 saw the enactment of the Agricultural and Industrial Bank Law and the Hypothec Bank Law calculated to finance farming with necessary funds, though these pieces of legislation fell rather short of the mark. The Agricultural Asscoiation Law constituted an important link in a chain of enactments embodying the Government's agriculture encouragement policy.

IV The Enactment of the Agricultural Association Law

The All-Japan Agricultural Conference at each annual session adopted a resolution for demanding the enactment of the Agricultural Association Law and carried on a campaign for the purpose towards the Cabinet and the Diet. At the 6th Conference held in December 1898 they adopted a draft of the pro-

posed Law, which was presented to the Diet by 12 Dietmen acting as spokesmen for the Conference. The bill was, in its main outlines, as follows: (1) As to membership, payers of two yen or more of land tax or owners of four *tan* or more of cultivated land should be automatically eligible, and farmers on application could be admitted. Thus landlords were the most important part of membership. (2) All automatically eligible persons should be compulsorily affiliated to town or village agricultural associations. (3) Membership dues should be compulsorily collected (collection being entrusted to a revenue officer of a town or village office, and the last resort being had to the National Tax Collection Law). This bill drew mostly on the ideas of the All-Japan Agricultural Society ("Zenkoku Nojikai), the governing body of the All-Japan Agricultural Conference, particularly on the ideas of Maeda. The bill was drastically revised because of the opposition of the Government, with the consequence that a simple Agricultural Association Law was passed providing mainly for a governmental subsidy. The provisions for compulsory membership and compulsory collection of membership dues were deleted from the original bill, and membership qualifications and kinds of agricultural associations were delegated to Imperial ordinances to be issued by the Government.

What does the difference mean between the original bill presented by the All-Japan Agricultural Conference and the final form of the enacted Agricultural Association Law? A consideration of the thoughts of Maeda, the leader of the Conference — a type of the "agriculture-first" principle — will throw light on the question. For many years he had occupied the important post of "brain truster" on production and industry administration in Japan and "Views on Industrial Promotion" (1884) edited by him was a valuable guide for the Government in formulating industrial policy. In its essence, the book developed a policy for governmental fostering of industries at the stage of original capital accumulation, and the underlying idea was an ideology of bureaucratic guidance "from above". But he had a somewhat different shade of opinion from the leading bureaucrats due partly to his retirement from office in 1890 and isolation from the predominant elements of the bureaucratic group and partly to a widening discrepancy between his thoughts strongly characterized by the "agriculture-first" principle and the realities of rapidly developing Japanese capitalism. Indeed he was emphasizing the development of agriculture, industry and commerce in order to catch up with the civilized nations, but he attached primary importance to agriculture and what he termed "proper in-

dustries" — backward traditional industries such as silk fabrics, ceramics, copperware, lacquer ware, Japanese paper, assigning a secondary place to "machine-driven industries" (typical capitalist industries). Maeda's view on industrial policy was seriously mistaken as to the future of Japanese capitalism, and it departed gradually from the position of the predominant elements of the Government with the advent of the period when capitalism was established; it became even out-dated. Following the Sino-Japanese War, what Maeda called "machine-driven industries" made an even more rapid development, while the so-called "proper industries" lost in significance.

In the domain of agriculture the change was apparently not so visible, but we witness a noteworthy phenomenon in the tendency towards the parasitism of the landed classes dwelt upon in foregoing pages. As important bearers of agricultural production and of the agricultural association system, Maeda counted upon and appealed to the local "gono" classes — more or less big landlords and at the same time farmers employing the labor of their own family members and of hired farm hands. They were residents in agricultural communities, were directly engaged in agricultural production and constituted the influential leader classes in such communities. But the tendency towards parasitism, or towards loss of the status of producers, became more and more marked. The first concern of "parasitic" landlords is an increase of rent in kind; they were no longer independent businessmen who, as producers, aimed at increased profits through his inventiveness and technical improvement. Their tenants were, for the most part, very small and poor peasants incompetent for the task of agricultural entrepreneurs. The necessary consequence of it was that the landlords depended, above all, upon governmental policy for the encouragement of agriculture and through it upon agricultural improvement and increased production. The above cited enactments of 1896–1900 were reflecting such interests of the landed classes.[10]

This transformation of the landlord classes necessarily had a delicate influence upon their idea of the agricultural association system. We may venture to oversimplify it as transformation from agricultural associations of "gono" as leading agricultural producers to agricultural associations of landowners tending towards parasitism. With the loss of the status of producers the landlord classes inevitably began to gradually lose their traditional personal control

10) The Civil Code that came into force in 1898 had the effect of fortifying the status of landlords as against tenants.

over the farming population which rested on the community order as a productive community. To make up for this loss of personal control there arose a demand for agricultural associations embodying new organized leadership, especially for their compulsory leadership.[11] One of the proponents of the Agricultural Association Bill declared before the House of Representatives Committee on the said Bill: "Society advances, and all industries are daily improved with the sole exception of agricultural production, which remains just what it used to be. This may be attributed to the fact that the landlord classes who have means are not directly engaged in production, while the lower farmer classes who are directly engaged in production have no means enough for agricultural improvement. There can be no hope of agricultural improvement unless something like agricultural associations are organized even with resort to more or less compulsion."[12]

Maeda's idea of agricultural associations and that of the parasitic landlord classes had in common ultimate reliance upon the Government's support, but the former tried to maintain, though in a limited degree, the independence of agricultural associations as groups of producers, while the latter were more inclined to rely upon the full protection and guidance of the central and local authorities. The Agricultural Association Bill adopted at the All-Japan Agricultural Conference was, so to speak, a mixture of these two elements.

The Government assumed a very prudent attitude towards the Agricultural Association Bill presented to the Diet. Some Government officials concerned even felt uneasy at positive utterances about agricultural administration voiced at the All-Japan Agricultural Conference. It was feared, therefore, lest the ag-

11) So as to prevent the oversimplification from being mischievously misleading we must make a few additional remarks. It is true that there was a decided tendency for the landlords to cease to be farmers themselves, but at this stage they were still more or less interested in agricultural production in their respective communities and continue to play a certain rôle in encouraging technical improvement and production increase. The agricultural policy in this period had in view, as the primary objective, increased production to meet the needs of Japan's foreign trade and of building armaments in preparation for an expected Russian war, and this objective was to be achieved through the leadership of the landed classes. Agricultural associations were a means of organizing such landlord leadership from the viewpoint of the Government as well as of the landlord classes. In the next period, or in the period that opened with the agricultural panic starting about 1907, the divorce of the landlord classes from production was more marked, with the consequence that the goal of agricultural associations and the character of the agricultural policy were no longer the same.

12) Proceedings of the House of Representatives Committee at the 13th session of the Imperial Diet.

ricultural associations with compulsory membership and with membership dues compulsorily collectible as the Bill provided for should grow into a powerful organization that could put restraint on the Government's agricultural policy, especially into an organization hard to deal with by combining with political parties, though these parties were becoming more and more compromising to the Government. The Government's attitude towards the Agricultural Association Bill was made even more prudent by two problems that were on the carpet just at that time — at the same 13th session of the Diet. One was the problem of land tax raise. The successive Cabinets took great pains in securing revenue sources so as to meet the need of armament expansion after the Sino-Japanese War and of fostering capitalist industries. When the Yamagata Cabinet (February 1898–October 1900) decided upon a land tax raise which it had taken over as a pending question from its predecessor, the Opposition "Kensei Honto" (lit. Orthodox Constitutional Party) and other anti-Government groups in the House of Peers and outside the Diet organized an Anti-Land-Tax-Raise League and launched an active campaign against the measure. The manifesto of the league attacked it on the ground that a land tax raise would "drain local resources, thereby impeding the development of local self-government and interfering with local public business." The other was the problem of local self-government. The local government had been developed more or less into shape by a series of enactments since 1888, but it left much to be desired in several respects. Particularly the county system which had been the greatest issue since its establishment proved to be contrary to the expectations of its framers, its defects being especially evident in the privilege of the big landlords and in the indirect election (county assemblymen to be elected by town and village assemblymen). A County Organization Reform Bill meant to remedy these two defects and to introduce the public election of the county headman had been successively presented by some Diet members since the 2nd session of the Diet. The farmers' fundamental policy for establishing local "self-government" system as a means of combining bureaucracy and the rule of country gentlemen and as a shock-absorbing device to mitigate the impact of political campaigns of the people upon central administration was thus thwarted by deviations and followed a zigzag course.

Such being the case, the Government could not help being highly cautious in dealing with the agricultural associations, even though the landlord classes tending to be "parasitic" were becoming more compromising to the Govern-

ment. It appears that at the opening of the 13th session of the Diet the Cabinet had not made up its mind yet as to the Agricultural Association Bill. Before the House of Representatives Committee on the Bill a member representing the Government said, "The Government has not yet any definite plan, although it has given much consideration to the Bill since it heard about its introduction at the opening of the present session of the Diet. ... For all that, I can at least declare on this occasion that the Government is prepared to subsidize the agricultural associations with a grant of ¥100,000–150,000 in 1900.[13] After all, the Government disapproved of the Bill in its original form and demanded that it be amended into a bill simply proving for a subsidy to agricultural associations. The proponents (and the All-Japan Agricultural Society behind them) agreed to the amendment, so that the Agricultural Association Law was passed in its amended form. The Government recognized the need of agricultural associations, to be sure, but it was on its guard against allowing them scope for independent activities and rather chose to subsidize them on one hand and to strictly supervise and control them so as to make them an auxiliary organ for the infiltration of its agricultural administration or agricultural associations of a bureaucratic character in this sense.

The best explanation of the All-Japan Agricultural Society's compromising attitude towards the Government is the weakness of the landlord classes. Despite the nation-wide expansion of the agricultural association system, at least in appearance, the fact was that it largely depended upon the subsidization and support of the prefectural and county authorities at the expense of independence in its activities, and that the landlord classes holding leadership in the system were earnestly aspiring to governmental subsidization and statutory authorization. We need hardly point out that this was closely connected with the landlords' tendency towards parasitism. "A History of the All-Japan Agricultural Society" ("Zenkoku Nojikai-shi") refers to it in these words: "Every district has an almost complete hierarchy of agricultural associations successfully engaged in agriculture encouragement fit for its purposes. But for want of legal sanctions the system does not seem to be well established as yet. Unless the Agricultural Association Law is promulgated now, it will not be long before agricultural associations now in existence will decline and disappear. That is

13) Proceedings of the House of Representatives Committee at the 13th session of the Imperial Diet.

why we did everything in our power to see the Law enacted."[14]

By this time a system of new agricultural techniques was well developed that was supposed to be the basis of governmental guidance. On the one hand, agricultural techniques cultivated in Tokyo Agricultural and Forestry College and agricultural laboratories on the basis of imported agricultural science since the early years of Meiji had attained a high level, while, on the other hand, limitations of the traditional veteran farmers' techniques based only on personal experience became clear. Agricultural associations had to rely to an increasing extent upon technical guidance by government officials.[15] Governmental subsidization and technical guidance were more profitable to the landed classes than "independence" of agricultural associations. In response to these wishes of the landed classes the above cited State Aid for Prefectural Agricultural Laboratories Law was enacted at the 13th session of the Diet. It was just what they badly wanted that agricultural associations would function as channels of technical guidance "from above". It need hardly be pointed out that their utter incompetency for the task of technical improvement was closely interrelated with their "parasitic" tendency.

The Agricultural Association Law was promulgated in June 1899. The Act simply provided for a State subsidy of not more than ¥ 150,000, delegating all other matters to Imperial ordinances. The Agricultural Association Ordinance (Imperial ordinance promulgated in February 1900) had various regulatory provisions. For example, we may mention requirements of approval by the competent authorities of the establishment of an agricultural association, amendments to the constitution or by-laws, expense budgets, assessment of dues, sources of revenue and of reporting to them about the preceding year's settlement of accounts and about affairs of the association, and power of the competent authorities to investigate the state of affairs of an association or inspect the accounting books and records if deemed necessary, or to issue orders necessary for supervising purposes.

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14) Eijuro Nishimura (ed.), A History of the All-Japan Agricultural Society (Zenkoku Nojikai-shi) (1911), pp. 80–81.

15) This technical guidance from above appears in the clearest form in the "Official Instructions to the Agricultural Associations" of 1903 to be referred to in the next section.

V Agricultural Associations under Bureaucratic Control

The Agricultural Association Law enacted at the 13th session of the Diet, together with several other pieces of legislation passed at the same session for the purpose of encouraging agriculture (such as the State Aid for Prefectural Agricultural Laboratories Law, the Arable Land Readjustment Law, the Fertilizer Control Law) was welcomed by the agricultural associations. Such was the impetus the new Law gave that the agricultural associations were multiplied and activated with increasing vigor. "A History of the All-Japan Agricultural Society" describes it in these words: "The agricultural associations expanded their scope of activities. They hired technical experts to deliver a series of lectures on agricultural techniques, they created experimental farms, they held exhibitions, fairs, competitive shows, seed exchanges, they made collective purchases. Their activities were indeed revolutionalized. They are no longer crawling about like so many infants; they now can stand on their own feet."[16]

But in fact the agricultural associations were not "standing on their own feet". For their activities the support of the central and local authorities was indispensable. The hightening bureaucratic color of the agricultural associations became reflected in the personnel of the association executive. Thus about this time prefectural governors, prefectural secretaries, county headmen, town or village headmen began to assume the presidency of agricultural associations on corresponding levels, and technical experts trained in agricultural schools to occupy important posts in agricultural associations for the dissemination of technical information, with the result that the "gono" coloring of the organizations was gradually fading away. Masana Maeda himself had resigned the virtual leadership of the All-Japan Agricultural Society (the governing body of the All-Japan Agricultural Conference). Thus there was an ever advancing tendency to turn agricultural associations into auxiliary organs for the infiltration of the Government's agricultural administration.

This tendency is most clearly indicated by the "Official Instructions to the Agricultural Associations" issued by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce in October 1903. In view of the regrettable fact that there were a very few farmers who applied with profit the results of experiments for the

16) A History of the All-Japan Agricultural Society, supra, p. 82.

improvement of production conducted so far in agricultural laboratories and other institutions, the Ministry ordered that the agricultural associations whose objective was to encourage and improve agricultural production should more actively encourage and guide their members to apply agricultural techniques recommended by the Government. The document contained a list of 16 concrete items to be carried into effect with regard to a wide range of subjects extending from rice culture as the main line and sericulture and stock-raising as side lines to arable land readjustment and industrial associations. With regard to rice culture on which it laid main emphasis, it gave detailed directions, for instance, as to how to select seeds, how to make beds for seedlings, how to set them out; and with regard to wheat and barley culture, as to how to prevent germ infection, in order that such information might be placed at the disposal of the farming people at large. The official instructions were meant not to introduce a radical change into the small-scale agriculture by very small owner-farmers and tenant farmers, but to introduce new agricultural techniques feasible within that framework. This technical improvement was conductive to productivity, to be sure, but no small part of increased income consequent on such technical improvement belonged not to such farmers, but to their landlords, so that the application of recommended techniques was little more than complicated operations and intensified labor in some cases. The agricultural leaders were highly cooperative in the enforcement of the instructions, but it was no easy thing to secure general compliance among the tenant classes.

At the gubernatorial conference held in February 1904 just after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Kiyoura stressed the need of leadership in agricultural production and ordered the enforcement of the said "Official Instructions to the Agricultural Associations". The leaders of the All-Japan Agricultural Society made a tour of the whole country to make known the intent of the Government, and the leaders of the local agricultural associations offered them co-operation in achieving its penetration among the general farmers. The war-time policy for increasing the production of foods accelerated the process of transforming agricultural associations into auxiliary organs for the government authorities. The actual state of things in those days may be gathered from the following remark of Director of the Agricultural Bureau Sako: "The agricultural associations have not made a uniform development in terms of uses, abilities, expenditures, but by and large they may be admitted to be useful and necessary. For instance, they

convey prefectural orders and instructions to the farming people in amplified form and see them followed, they hold agricultural meetings, they distribute seeds and seedlings, they assist in getting seeds, distribute samples of weeders. The agricultural associations have proved to be efficient in all these small functions which are unfit to be taken care of by the government authorities but cannot be neglected without affecting agricultural production. But on the whole they are still in a stage of infancy and are in need of redoubled efforts for further development.... They cannot hope to grow all by themselves from the first. They must, in my view, look to the prefectural authorities for tender guidance and generous assistance, though this may be somewhat against the rule of separation of Government and people."

In a number of prefectures the Official Instructions were enforced by bringing police power to bear directly upon recalcitrant farmers. Japanese historians sometimes refer to this coercive agricultural administration as "saber agricultural administration", which derives from the weapon a Japanese policeman used to wear in those days. At the national conference of the regular officers of prefectural agricultural associations in 1906 some participants went so far as to suggest that it was desirable to place policemen on the staff of agricultural associations, for "a flourish of the saber is more persuasive than a thousand words."[17] In October 1905 the Government amended the Agricultural Association Ordinance to adopt the system of compulsory membership, the very system it had rejected at the time of enacting the Agricultural Association Law in 1899. This measure may imply that the Government itself came to realize the desirability of the compulsory membership system for an extensive and efficient exercise of authoritative control of agriculture, now that the agricultural associations were practically auxiliary organs for the governmental authorities. Moreover, the prudent Government also extended presidential powers so as to facilitate its authoritative control, in view of the fact that very frequently it happened that prefectural and county agricultural associations were under the presidency of prefectural governors and county headmen resepctively.

The trend towards class differentiation between "parasitic" landlords and tenants and conflict of interests between the two classes, and towards agricultural associations representing not so much the interests of the latter as of the former was most distinctly observable in the rice examination system. The rapid de-

17) Central Agricultural Bulletin (Chuo-Noji-ho) (issued by the All-Japan Agricultural Society), No. 70 (1906).

velopment of capitalist industries and the consequent increase in urban population accelarating the commercialization of agricultural products, especially rice, made the landlord classes more and more concerned about the interests as sellers of rice that they received as rent in kind. A rice examination system whose function was to secure qualitative improvement and homogeneity required of rice as merchandise was in operation to some extent among dealers in rice from about 1887. Its need came to be felt by the landlord classes, with the consequence that an increasing number of county, town and village agricultural associations conducted their own rice examination. Towards 1905–06 there arose a growing cry for a unified examination system. Agricultural associations that were leading in the power of landlords and in the amount of rice production requested the prefectural authorities to this effect as also did prefectural legislatures, and the All-Japan Agricultural Society presented a series of petitions to the Government from 1905 that an Act to establish a public examination system be passed. At the 22nd session of the Diet in 1906 members of the House of Peers representing the landed classes passed a petition for a system of examination to be conducted by prefectural authorities. Their demand finally materialized in 1910. A succession of tenancy disputes may be traced in many cases to dissatisfaction with the examination system, for the tenants knew that the examination system introduced under the pretext of rice improvement would eventually affect them adversely and their landlords favorably. It was about this time that unions of tenants began to make a rapid increase. Unions of landlords organized in different parts of the country about the same time, forming a common front with the agricultural associations against the unions of tenants, supported the rice examination system as one of their main objectives. The examination system was a turning-point for the deepening antagonism between the landlord and the tenant classes.

VI The Birth of the Imperial Agricultural Association — A Nation-wide Hierarchy of Agricultural Associations Consummated

In the meantime, the landed classes came to realize that their interests were coming into conflict with those of the bourgeoisie rapidly rising with the growth of capitalism. A clash of interests did ensue at last in connection with customs duties on agricultural products. It was in response to the strong appeal

of the All-Japan Agricultural Society that in 1902 the Diet approved a raise of the *ad valorem* rate on imported eggs from 10 to 20 per cent. This event was instrumental in attracting general attention in and outside the Diet to the controversy between freetraders and protectionists. In 1904 an import duty was imposed on rice for the first time as a special emergency tax for the double purpose of raising revenue and of protecting agriculture. In 1906 it was decided that the said tax should continue as a permanent tax, and this too was due to successful lobbying on the part of the All-Japan Agricultural Society. In 1908 a fall in rice price consequent on the economic depression dealt a heavy blow at the landed classes, and caused the All-Japan Agricultural Society and Diet members representing the interests of the landlord classes to demand a raise in the rice tariff. At the 25th session of the Diet (1909) the Rice Tariff Raise Bill was approved in the House of Representatives, but was shelved in the House of Peers. This movement of the landlords gave rise to a counter-movement of commercial and industrial capitalists. In July 1909 the Japan Industrial Association ("Nippon Kogyo-kai") published a written opinion on tariff improvement advocating a tariff reduction, and in September the same year the National Conference of Chambers of Commerce adopted a resolution to demand the abolution of the rice tariff. In learned circles there was a deep interest in this problem. Heated debates were had at the 1905 session of the Economic Association and at the 1908 session of the Social Policy Association. The clash of interests between the landlord and the bourgeois classes was not necessarily diametrical. The extremely low standard of living of petty tenant farmers laboring under the "parasitic" landlords was an important factor in the maintenance of low wages of urban laborers, and the enormous farming population was a source of supply on which capitalist industries could draw for labor force they needed. Besides, a large portion of profit the landlords gained by exploiting their tenants was invested in capitalist enterprises rather than in agricultural production itself because they were no longer engaged in such production themselves. To this extent the landlord classes had a common interest with the bourgeoisie. Both of them were dominating classes as against the tenants and laborers, and the bureaucratic Government had for its principal function the reconciliation and furtherance of the interests of both the classes. The balance between the two was not always a stable one. The rise of the bourgeoisie with the rapid growth of capitalist industries since about 1897, especially since 1905 on the one hand and the agricultural panic that interrupted the smooth develop-

ment of agriculture on the other necessitated a reorganization of the landlord camp.

Under this situation, especially in their relations to petty farmers and as against the bourgeoisie, the agricultural associations keenly felt the need of establishing a central organ of a hierarchy of agricultural associations and of organizing and intestifying the central organ's lobbying towards the Diet and the Cabinet. The Agricultural Association Ordinance of 1900 authorized prefectural, county, and town and village agricultural associations, but did not go so far as to officially authorize the central agricultural association (The All-Japan Agricultural Society) holding nation-wide control over them. In and after 1902 the Society adopted a series of resolutions at the annual general meeting to demand that State authorization be conferred on the Society. The agricultural association leaders expected that, if authorized by State power, their hiearchy of agricultural associations including the central organ would, as a whole, enhance its dignity and influence on the one hand, and, on the other, would strengthen its voice with respect to the Government industrial policy increasingly reflecting the interests of the bourgeoisie. But the All-Japan Agricultural Society had to wait several years before its demand was filled, because the governmental authorities rather frowned upon the Society whose opinions and demands as to the Government's agricultural policy were often offending to the bureaucratic disposition, even though they were not strong objections or protests, but rather moderate requests of partial amendments.

The All-Japan Agricultural Society made it a rule to entrust a handful of Society staff members and a dozen representatives of local agricultural associations with the task of handling petitions and proposals to be submitted to the Diet and the Cabinet. The local representatives were those who were staying in Tokyo for a while for that purpose after an annual general meeting. But the increasing need of political campaigns called for a reorganization and reinforcement of the forces. In March 1907 President Hisayoshi Kano, who was a member of the House of Peers took the initiative in organizing a "Society for the Study of Agricultural Administration" ("Nosei Kenkyu-kai") out of those Diet members representing the interests of agricultural communities, more accurately, of the landlord classes (25 members of the House of Peers and 194 members of the House of Representatives.) This Society of which Kano was secretary general was, as it were, a detached force of the All-Japan Ag-

ricultural Society and became an important channel for its Cabinet and Diet maneuvering. The All-Japan Agricultural Society and the Society for the Study of Agricultural Amdinistration had a share in many enactments or amendments of the day implementing agricultural policy, such as Amendments to the Industrial Association Law, to the Agricultural and Industrial Bank Law, to the Japan Hypothec Bank Law, to the Arable Land Readjustment Law and to the Fertilizer Control Law, the Regulations for Subsidizing Mulberry Farms, and the Regulations for Encouraging Arable Land Readjustment and Land Improvement among others. In their eyes, however, the Government's agricultural policy left much to be desired. At the 23rd session of the Diet (1907) they moved a resolution for disbursing ¥3,000,000 for more positive agricultural encouragement and succeeded in getting it adopted over the objection of the Diet members representing the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. But what they really gained was a little more than one-sixth of the amount due to an expansion of military expenditures and military industries expenditures.

The leaders of the All-Japan Agricultural Society all the more aspired to the legal authorization of their organization. To the Diet session of 1909 a bill to amend the Agricultural Association Law providing for the authorization of the Society and for an increase of the subsidy for the agricultural associations was introduced through Diet members affiliated with the Society for the Study of Agricultural Administration, but the Government's attitude was negative due to the fact that the agricultural associations which ought to perform the function of encouraging agricultural improvement were instead functioning as "deliberative organs" for making demands and petitions to the Government, and that the Government was in financial difficulties. The bill passed the House of Representatives, but was pigeon-holed in the House of Peers that was in sympathy with the intention of the Cabinet. The bill for a raise in the corn tariff presented at the same session of the Diet met the same fate.

When the same bill to amend the Agricultural Association Law was reintroduced to the next year's session of the Diet (deleting the part of increased subsidy), the Government was not so hostile as it had been in the preceding year. The Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Commerce declared: "The Government has no reason why it should oppose this bill, but does not find in it any merit that would justify the willing approval of the Government.... It would be more advisable to give the prefectural agricultural associations full scope for

activities."[18] The bill passed both Houses, and in November the same year the All-Japan Agricultural Society, a private central organ, became an authorized "Imperial Agricultural Association" ("Teikoku Nokai"). It was, however, not because the Government found it necessary to lay more emphasis on the interests of the landlord classes than of the bourgeoisie that it finally agreed to the amendment bill. It was rather because the Government more keenly felt the need of tightening its grip on the farming people through the agricultural associations by strengthening Government control over them. In the final analysis, the problem of the agricultural association system had much to do with the problem of local government in 1910 as was also the case in 1891 and in 1899. It was a big problem both to the landlord classes and to the Government how to reinforce the traditional order in agricultural community enfeebled due partly to the advancing tendency of the landlords to become divorced from production and "parasitic" and to the impact upon agricultural communities of capitalist economy rapidly growing especially after the Russo-Japanese War. Among the factors in the overhauling the Government's idea of local "self-government" towards tightened control by the Government were the aforesaid clash between the landlord and the tenant classes that had undeniably come to the front, and the social unrest and the distress of the masses caused partly by the agricultural panic starting in 1908 and partly by the local finance impoverished by the expansion of national finance in the war-time and post-war years. Tightened control found expression directly in a vast amount of orders, directives and instructions of the Home Minister, prefectural governers and county headmen, all of which aimed at increased supervision and guidance of cities, towns and villages by higher authorities, and at extended powers of mayors, town and village headmen over citizens, town and village inhabitants. These orders, directives and instructions were put together into a systematic whole in the shape of amendments to the City Organization Law and the Town and Village Organization Law. This reorganization of the local "self-government" system rendered it necessary not only to make the whole administrative structure more authoritarian in this way, but also to organize and reorganize various auxiliary agencies for the infiltration of amidnistration. To cite some illustrations, tax-payers' unions to assist taxation administration, savings associations to facilitate savings administration, the Veterans' Association and

18) Proceedings of the House of Peers at the 26th session of the Imperial Diet.

the Women's Patriotic Association to serve military administration were all founded about this time more or less on the basis of the traditional local order on the initiative of the Government. The reorganization of the agricultural association system through the establishment of the Imperial Agricultural Association was likewise an important link in the "local improvement movement" as the Katsura Cabinet called it. The Government's intent behind the reorganization of the agricultural association system is clearly visible in the special councilorship system introduced by amending the Agricultural Association Ordinance simultaneously with the establishment of the Imperial Agricultural Association. This system was formulated on the model of the German counterpart. Prefectural agricultural associations and the Imperial Agricultural Association were to have special councilors appointed by the authorities and privileged to participate at the general meeting with other councilors elected by ordinary members and, in the case of the Imperial Agricultural Association, to occupy one-third of the seats in the Council. Now it is obvious that the birth of the Imperial Agricultural Association signified the tightening of governmental control over the whole hierarchy of agricultural associations and through it over the whole farming population.

N. B. For an account at some length of the whole process until the enactment of the Agricultural Association Law (1899), see my article "Formation of the Hierarchal Agricultural Association System" (Kobe Law Journal, Vol. 9, No. 3).